



Federal Bureau of Investigation
Phoenix, Arizona



United States Attorney's Office
District of Arizona

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TUCSON MAN INDICTED AND ARRESTED FOR SOUTHWEST GAS LINE SABOTAGE

Indictment alleges 16 attacks on gas pipelines in Southern Arizona

TUCSON, Ariz. – Thomas Lee Young, 58, was arrested by the FBI here yesterday without incident based on a warrant stemming from an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on October 26, 2005 charging him with 16 counts of Destruction of an Energy Facility and two counts of Mailing Threatening Communications. Young, a former Southwest Gas employee, is alleged to have intentionally sabotaged facilities owned by Southwest Gas Corporation in Pinal and Pima Counties on a number of occasions between November 2000 through December 2002. The investigation was conducted jointly by the FBI, the Pima County Sheriff's Office and the Pinal County Sheriff's Office. The indictment was unsealed today. Young's initial appearance in Tucson federal court will be at 2:00 p.m. today, Friday, October 28, 2005.

Young is accused of tampering with regulator stations and gas lines, causing natural gas at a high pressure to be forced into systems designed for a lower pressure, and in some instances, drilling holes in the pipelines. Some of the attacks resulted in the interruption of gas service to homes and businesses during periods of freezing weather. The sabotage was also accompanied by extortion letters to Southwest Gas and the Arizona Corporation Commission threatening additional damage to Southwest Gas pipelines in Arizona.

U.S. Attorney Paul Charlton stated that "The nature of these events is such that we intend to seek Mr. Young's detention pending trial. This was a complex and lengthy investigation which owes its success to the hard work of the FBI and many local agencies."

Special Agent in Charge of the FBI, Phoenix Division, Jana D. Monroe stressed that it was believed that Young acted alone and did so for personal gain. Monroe stated, "though the investigation was led by the joint efforts of the FBI, and Pima and Pinal County Sheriff's Offices, the agencies also received extensive assistance from Southwest Gas representatives who provided valuable technical and internal knowledge. Additionally, the Arizona Department of Public Safety, Oro Valley Police Department, Tucson Police Department and the Phoenix Police Department provided assistance with certain portions of the investigation."

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A conviction for each count of Destruction of an Energy Facility carries a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. A conviction for each count of Mailing Threatening Communications carries a maximum penalty of two years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, the assigned judge will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

An indictment is simply the method by which a person is charged with criminal activity and raises no inference of guilt. An individual is presumed innocent until competent evidence is presented to a jury that establishes guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

The prosecution is being handled by Beverly Anderson, Assistant U.S. Attorney, District of Arizona, Tucson, Ariz.

CASE NUMBER: CR-05-2041-TUC
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